

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

1615 H STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20062-2000
202/463-5310

July 22, 2014

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations, and dedicated to promoting, protecting, and defending America's free enterprise system, supports the bipartisan higher education bills being considered by the House this week; however, these bills should only be a first step in what must be a complete reauthorization of the Higher Education Act that promotes innovation, transparency, and improved access and affordability in higher education.

With respect to H.R. 3136, the "Advancing Competency-Based Education Demonstration Projects Act of 2013," the Chamber supports providing waivers to institutions for innovation in the delivery of high-quality competency-based education programs. These programs have the potential to reduce the time it takes for students to earn a degree, thereby making college more affordable. These programs also offer the opportunity for employers to engage with institutions of higher education and help identify the skills and competencies necessary for specific courses and programs, thus improving the career readiness of graduates. The Chamber is particularly supportive of the provisions that would ensure a broad mix of providers, including private and for-profit institutions of higher education, are able to participate in these demonstration programs.

Regarding H.R. 4983, the "Strengthening Transparency in Higher Education Act," the Chamber supports efforts to increase data transparency for college students and their families. It is particularly important that user-friendly, timely, and accurate institutional-level information on the true costs of attendance, effectiveness in student learning, transfer of credit policies, and completion rates be available. It is also important for students, families, and employers to have access to information from robust accreditation reviews. H.R. 4983 would take an important first step in driving such transparency, and the Chamber looks forward to working with you and your colleagues to ensure students and parents have all the information they need to make informed decisions.

With respect to H.R. 4984, the "Empowering Students through Enhanced Financial Counseling Act," the Chamber supports improved counseling for students so they have the information they need on Pell Grants and student loans to effectively budget and manage their higher education expenses. Provisions that promote innovative online tools are also a positive step toward expanding the availability of financial counseling to students.

In addition to supporting efforts to address these critical higher education issues, the Chamber is encouraged by the bipartisan nature of these bills and the clear desire to come

together to further strengthen our nation's higher education system. The Chamber looks forward to working with you on these bills, as well as the broader reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Bruce Josten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "R." and last name "Josten" being the most prominent parts.

R. Bruce Josten